



# typeinvestigations

116 East 16<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10003

## **Ida B. Wells Fellowship** **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **May I apply if I am currently a student or intern?**

Yes.

### **May I apply if I have a full-time job?**

Yes. If you're named a finalist, we'll ask you to arrange with your employer for accommodations to allow you to accept the fellowship. We require that your editor allow you to devote about one day a week to your fellowship project until it's completed.

### **Do I have to be U.S. citizen or a U.S. resident to apply?**

No. But since our goal is to diversify the investigative reporting landscape in the United States, it's important that you intend to have a career working primarily in the U.S. media.

### **How many years of experience is too many?**

There's no limit. If you've been a journalist for many years but want to pivot and become an investigative reporter, you are encouraged to apply.

### **If I have personal obligations in early June and could not attend the Investigative Reporters & Editors conference, may I still apply?**

As this is the conference will be the main opportunity for the fellows to meet and create community, you may want to wait to apply until next year.

### **May I apply if I am not a person of color?**

Yes. We simply need you to tell us a little bit about yourself and how your presence would contribute to the diversification of investigative journalism.

### **What makes a story "investigative"?**

By investigative we mean enterprise reporting — digging up stories other reporters haven't found yet or significantly advancing stories that have been covered, but not in depth. These are stories that go beyond feature reporting by offering up substantial new facts. They document problems and often show who's responsible, whether a corporation, a government agency, or an elected official.

### **How much time will it take to produce an investigative work for the fellowship?**

This is not the kind of story you can produce in a week or two. Most investigations will require extensive phone reporting, reading, and research; some might require a week or two of field reporting; others might require weeks of poring through documents or building databases. An investigative feature for radio or television might run 20 minutes; a print piece often runs to 6,000 words. So it will typically take more than a week to write a first draft, and after that substantial additional time for multiple revises, fact-checking, legal review, and more. Your Type Investigations editor will be available for advice and feedback through every stage of this process.

### **Will my Type Investigations editor help me place my story?**

Yes, absolutely. We have an extensive network of journalism partners.

### **Can I propose an international story?**

Sure. All we ask is that the story be intended for placement in at a U.S. publication.

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## **How can I find an investigative story idea?**

When looking for investigative story ideas, it's a good idea to start by doing an extensive search of the coverage of your topic. Read, view and listen to as many clips as you can. And check out government reports related to your topic. As you read, you'll start to notice that certain sources recur in each story. Make note of their names. Jot down a list of questions to ask them and call and email them to ask for an interview. Tell them that you're a reporter who is looking for story ideas and would like to do a background interview, in advance of submitting some story ideas to an editor by our application deadline. Sooner or later, these interviews will lead you to a few story ideas.

## **Are fellows who are staff reporters expected to place their stories with their employers?**

Type Investigations does not determine where the work created by our fellows appears. We always discuss placement, and very often are able to help connect writers with editors, but ultimately it is the writer who makes the decision. In the case of fellows who are staff, that question would need to be resolved between the writer and his or her employer.

## **Can a fellow who is a staff reporter use the resources of their employers? For example if my newsroom has an investigative unit can I use their resources to complete my project? Yes.**

## **Can fellows who are staff reporters work with their employers to generate ideas for the proposal? Yes.**

## **Is Type Investigative interested in local stories published in local outlets? Or should projects have a national focus?**

We are open to local stories, and we have had lots of success with local stories when they have appeared in local media. However, given the contraction of the news business, local stories tend to be harder to place for freelance applicants. That's something for every writer to consider as you develop your proposals — is there an audience and an outlet for this idea — and something that Type Investigations editors will consider when evaluating applications.

## **Do the samples submitted for the application have to be writing samples? Are radio/broadcast pieces acceptable?**

We accept print, online, and broadcast samples. Applicants who work in Spanish are also eligible (we have the capacity to do Spanish-language projects), though work samples should be translated for the application process.

## **Can a team of two apply to Ida B. Wells fellowship?**

At this time we're not accepting applications from teams. If you are working on something with a partner, you can each still apply, but you would need to do so separately. You can either work out an agreement that allows one of you to propose your current project. Or you can each propose an entirely new one. Either way, you are both individually eligible.

## **Is it okay to propose more than one investigative story?**

Yes, but we encourage you to stick to one, to avoid spreading yourself too thin.